

Titian, 1488/1490-1576
Cardinal Pietro Bembo

**KRESS CATALOGUE NUMBER**

K1333

IDENTIFIER

444

ARTIST

Titian, 1488/1490-1576

NATIONALITY

Italian

DATE

1539/1540

MEDIUM

oil on canvas

TYPE OF OBJECT

Painting

DIMENSIONS

94.5 x 76.5 cm (37 3/16 x 30 1/8 in)

LOCATION

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

PROVENANCE

Probably commissioned by the sitter, Cardinal Pietro Bembo [1470-1547], Padua and Rome; by inheritance to his son, Torquato Bembo [1525-1595]. [1] probably (Ferrante Carlo [1578-1641], Rome), and acquired from him before 1631 by Don Fabrizio Valguarnera [d. 1632], Rome. [2] Leone Galli; acquired 1636 by Cardinal Antonio Barberini [1608-1671], Palazzo Barberini, Rome; by inheritance to his nephew, Maffeo Barberini, Principe di Palestrina [d. 1685], Rome; by inheritance to his son, Urbano Barberini, Rome; [3] still in the Barberini collection, Rome, c. 1904-1905; [4] Elia Volpi [1858-1938], Florence; sold 1905 to (Colnaghi's, London and New York), on joint account with (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold 1906 to Charles M. Schwab [1862-1939], New York; [5] (his estate sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, 3 December 1942, no. 32); purchased by Stephen Pichetto for the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York; [6] gift 1952 to NGA. [1] In his final testament, drawn up in 1544, Bembo left his entire art

collection to Torquato, and instructed him to integrate the objects then in Rome with the bulk of the collection in Padua. For about the next twenty years it remained complete; but thereafter Torquato began to dismantle it, sending important parts of it back to Rome for sale in 1581 and 1583. See Sabine Eiche, "On the Dispersal of Cardinal Bembo's Collections," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz* 27 (1983): 353–359. Perhaps Titian's portrait was sold from the Bembo collection around this time. [2] As pointed out by Jeremy Wood, "Van Dyck's Cabinet de Titien: The Contents and Dispersal of His Collection," *The Burlington Magazine* 132 (1990): 681 n. 9, the picture is very likely to be identical with the portrait of Bembo by Titian acquired by the Sicilian nobleman Don Fabrizio Valguarnera from the dealer Ferrante Carlo before 1631. The portrait is mentioned twice in the documents relating to Valguarnera's trial for theft in that year: first in an inventory of his possessions ("Il Ritratto di Monse Bembo è di mano di Titiano è quell'istesso che hò detto di sopra d'haver compro da Ferrante de Carolis"); and second in Carlo's testimony to the court ("Un'ritratto dicono del Bembo di mano di Titiano grande dal mezzo in su' del naturale"). See Jane Costello, "The Twelve Pictures 'Ordered by Velasquez' and the Trial of Valguarnera," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 273, 276. [3] According to an inventory of Cardinal Barberini, the picture was acquired on 20 November 1636 from Leone Galli. See Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *Seventeenth Century Barberini Documents and Inventories of Art*, New York, 1975: 41 no. 334: "Uno in tela con cornice di noce alto pmi cinque in circa un retratto di un Cardinale mano Chredosi della prima maniera de Titiano." Despite the vagueness of the description, which fails to identify the sitter, the portrait is clearly identical with the one of Bembo listed in subsequent Barberini inventories. These include Cardinal Antonio's inventories of 1644 (Lavin 1975, 166 no. 232) and 1671 (Lavin 1975, 295 no. 71), and the inventory of his bequests of 1672 (Lavin 1975, 345 no. 230), according to which it was inherited by his nephew. The portrait duly appears in the posthumous 1686 inventory of Maffeo's legacy to his son (Lavin 1975, 409 no. 342). The evidence of the seventeenth-century Barberini inventories published by Lavin disproves the attempted identification by Wethey of the picture with a portrait of a cardinal by Titian that had been acquired for the family by Bernini before 1631; see Harold Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, 3 vols., London, 1969-1975: 2(1971):83. [4] According to the Getty Provenance Index, the painting is recorded in a 1730 inventory of Cardinal Francesco II Barberini (p. 35, no. 218): "3695 Un Ritratto del Cardle. Bembo a sedere alto pmi 5, largo pmi 4 incirca, con barba longa, e libro nella mano manca, con cornice liscia dorata, si dice mano del Titiano [attribution crossed out] in cattivo stato 50." The painting is still recorded in the Barberini collection by Oskar Fischel, *Tizian: Des Meisters Gemälde*, Stuttgart [u.a.], 1904: no. 72, and by George Lafenestre and Eugène Richtenberger, *La Peinture en Europe. Rome: Les musées, les collections particulières, les palais*, Paris, 1905: 157. [5] Details of ownership by Volpi, Colnaghi, and Knoedler, and the Schwab purchase date, are according to the Getty Provenance Index and the M. Knoedler & Co. archives, the latter courtesy in 2002 of Edye Weissler, Knoedler archivist and librarian (see the e-mail of 12 September 2002, in NGA curatorial files). The painting is in Colnaghi's private ledgers, and was Knoedler's London number 3828 and New York number 10755. The Knoedler archives citation reads "4/30/06, stock no. 10755, Titian Cardinal Bembo." See also M. Knoedler & Co. Records, accession number 2012.M.54, Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles: Sales Book 8, 1900 November-1907 April, page 332, copy in NGA curatorial files. [5] According to the Getty Provenance Index; Pichetto was the Kress Foundation's curator and conservator.

ACCESSION NUMBER

1952.5.28

KRESS NUMBER

1333

LEGACY NGA NUMBER

826

1 ACQUISITION

Parke-Bernet Galleries, 1939

2 DISTRIBUTIONS

Loan to National Gallery of Art, January 23, 1946

Gift to National Gallery of Art, October 15, 1952

EXTERNAL LINKS

Related Collection Record

<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.41638.html>

Related National Gallery of Art Library Image Collections Record

https://library.nga.gov/permalink/01NGA_INST/1p5jkvq/alma99275583804896

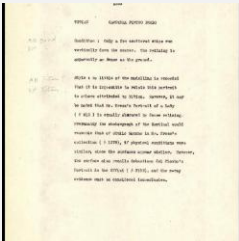
Related National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalog

<https://www.nga.gov/research/online-editions/italian-paintings-of-the-sixteenth-century.html>

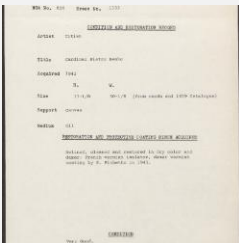
6 ARCHIVAL ITEMS



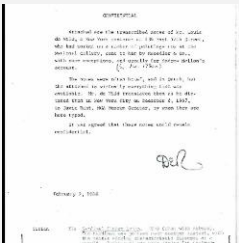
K1333 - Art object record, circa 1930s-1950s



K1333 - Alan Burroughs report, circa 1930s-1940s



K1333 - Condition and restoration record, circa 1950s-1960s



K1333 - Expert opinion by Wild, 1968



K1333 - Work summary log, 1967

K1333 - Examination summary, 1989

K1333 - Examination summary, 1989

<https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/444>